

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 EUR-25 NIC-01 DRC-01 /139 W

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R 040610Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5030

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL PESHAWAR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK, UR, XH

SUBJ: GOP REQUEST FOR RESTRAINT IN CONTACTS WITH POLITICAL
OPPOSITION LEADERS

1. YESTERDAY AKRAM ZAKI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE AMERICAS AND WEST EUROPE DESK, CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE TO CONVEY CONCERN OF GOVERNMENT IN RECENT MONTHS OVER WHAT HE TERMED AS LARGE NUMBER OF CNTACTS BETWEEN USG OFFICIALS IN PAKISTAN AND LEADERS OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION GROUPS. ZAKI SAID GOVERNMENT SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED THAT FIRST INTENTION WAS TO HAVE THIS MATTER RAISED WITH EMBASSY BY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BUT IT THEN DECIDED APPROACH SHOULD BE MORE "INFORMAL" IN WHICH LIGHT THIS DISCUSSION SEEMINGLY VIEWED.

2. ZAKI REQUESTED OUR RELATIONSHIPS (AND HERE HE MENTIONED KARACHI CONSULATE GENERAL AND PESHAWAR CONSULATE) WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS BE LESS CONSPICUOUS, MAKING SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY LEADERSHIP IN BALUCHISTAN AND NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE. HE NOTED THAT IMAGE AND STATUS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS IS

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OFTEN IMPROVED WHEN THEY CAN CLAIM A CERTAIN AMOUNT

OF RECOGNITION FROM AND RAPPORT WITH FOREIGN OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF MAJOR POWER LIKE UNITED STATES. FURTHER, HE SAID THAT GOP KEEPS TIGHT REIN OVER ACTIVITIES OF REPRESENTATIVES OF SOVIET UNION AND EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND DISCOURAGES THEIR DEVELOPING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLITICAL LEADERS OF PAKISTAN. WHEN UNITED STATES OFFICIALS ARE SEEN MOVING ABOUT FREELY IT IS MADE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOP TO CONTROL MOVEMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND MAINTAIN APPEARANCES OF BEING NON-DISCRIMINATORY IN THIS REGARD.

3. I ASSURED ZAKI THAT USG OFFICIALS SEEK AT ALL TIMES TO BE CIRCUMSPECT IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADING POLITICAL FIGURES OF BOTH GOVERNMENT AND OF OPPOSITION. WE DO APPRECIATE THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT ALLOWED UNDER THE BHUTTO GOVERNMENT AS COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS TIMES AND WE DO UNDERSTAND HOW HERE IN PAKISTAN CLOSE CONTACTS BETWEEN POLITICAL FIGURES AND FOREIGN OFFICIALS CAN BE MISINTERPRETED BY THE PUBLIC. I SAID WE WILL CONTINUE TO EXERT CARE THAT OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH POLITICAL OPPOSITION NOT MISUNDERSTOOD. I NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT WE CANNOT VERY WELL CARRY OUT OUR DUTIES AND MAKE INFORMED JUDGMENTS UNLESS WE HAVE ACCESS ALL POLITICAL ELEMENTS. INASMUCH AS GOP ITSELF PLACES NO RESTRAINTS UPON OPPOSITION FIGURES THEMSELVES, WE CANNOT AVOID REGULAR CONTACT WITH THEM NOR WOULD WE WANT TO DO SO. IF OUR OFFICERS SPEND TOO LITTLE OF THEIR TIME WITH LEADING PPP FIGURES, AS HAS BEEN SAID, IT IS BECAUSE PPP MEMBERSHIP SEEMS MORE RETICENT ABOUT MEETING WITH FOREIGN OFFICERS.

4. ZAKI AGREED IT IMPORTANT THAT CONSULAR AND DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL BE ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT AND MEET WITH PAKISTANI PUBLIC AT ALL LEVELS. HE INDICATED HIS REQUEST FOR CIRCUMSPECTION IN DEALINGS WITH LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION SHOULD NOT IN ANY SENSE BE TAKEN AS GOP EFFORT TO PROHIBIT MEETINGS OR DISCUSSIONS BY USG OFFICIALS WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS. GOP, HE SAID, ONLY SEEKS IN THIS INFORMAL AND LOW-KEY FASHION TO POINT UP THE SENSITIVE POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARTICULARLY IN BALUCHISTAN AND NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, AND REQUEST THAT EMBASSY AND CONSULAR REPS EXERCISE TACT AND CIRCUMSPECTION IN DEALINGS WITH OPPOSITION FIGURES SO AS NOT GIVE THEM WHAT MIGHT BE VIEWED AS USG SUPPORT OR ENCOURAGEMENT. LUPPI

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